

CLAIMS:

1. A home entertainment system, comprising:
a gateway (110) for receiving an external digital audio/video signal having audio data components and video data components; and
a video display module (120), an audio amplifier module (140), and a storage/playback module (135) connected to the gateway via respective digital links (115, 130, 125); wherein:
the video display module (120) is dedicated to displaying the video data components, the audio amplifier module (140) is dedicated to reproducing the audio data components, and the storage/playback module (135) is dedicated to storage/playback functions for storing and playing back at least one of the audio data components and video data components.
2. The home entertainment system of claim 1, wherein:
the storage/playback module (135) comprises at least one of a DVD/CD-RW (520) and a hard drive (HD) (530).
3. The home entertainment system of claim 1, wherein:
the video display module (120) comprises a video decoder (320) for decoding encoded video signals provided to it by the gateway (110) via the respective digital link (115).
4. The home entertainment system of claim 1, wherein:
the audio amplifier module (140) comprises an audio decoder (420) for decoding encoded audio signals provided to it by the gateway (110) via the respective digital link (130).
5. The home entertainment system of claim 1, wherein:
the external digital audio/video signal is from the Internet.
6. The home entertainment system of claim 1, wherein:
the external digital audio/video signal is from at least one of a digital cable network, a digital satellite network, and a digital terrestrial network.
7. The home entertainment system of claim 1, wherein:
the audio amplifier module (140) plays audio data retrieved from the storage/playback module (135) by the gateway (110).
8. The home entertainment system of claim 1, wherein:

the video display module (120) plays video data retrieved from the storage/playback module (135) by the gateway (110).

9. The home entertainment system of claim 1, wherein:
the storage/playback module (135) and video display module (120) have no audio decoding capability.
10. The home entertainment system of claim 1, wherein:
the audio amplifier module (140) has no video decoding capability.
11. The home entertainment system of claim 1, wherein:
the gateway (110) comprises a plurality of digital tuners (210, 212, 214) for receiving digital signals from respective different digital networks.
12. The home entertainment system of claim 1, wherein:
the audio and video data components are scrambled;
the gateway (110) comprises a conditional access (CA) component (220) for descrambling the scrambled audio and video data components to provide descrambled audio and video data components.
13. The home entertainment system of claim 12, wherein:
the conditional access module (220) can be accessed by the video display module (120), audio amplifier module (140), and storage/playback module (135) to receive the descrambled and encoded audio and video data components via their respective digital links (115, 130, 125).
14. The home entertainment system of claim 1, wherein:
the gateway (110) comprises a conditional access (CA) component (220);
the audio and video data components are scrambled;
the gateway (110) provides the scrambled audio and video data components for storage at the storage/playback module (135); and
upon request of the video display module (120), the gateway (110) retrieves the scrambled video data components from the storage/playback module (135) and descrambles the scrambled video data components at the conditional access component (220) to provide descrambled video data components to the video display module (120) for decoding and display thereat.
15. The home entertainment system of claim 1, wherein:
the gateway (110) comprises a conditional access (CA) component (220);
the audio and video data components are scrambled;

the gateway (110) provides the scrambled audio and video data components for storage at the storage/playback module (135); and

upon request of the audio amplifier module (140), the gateway (110) retrieves the scrambled audio data components from the storage/playback module (135) and descrambles the scrambled audio data components at the conditional access component (220) to provide descrambled audio data components to the audio amplifier module (140) for decoding and reproduction thereat.

16. The home entertainment system of claim 1, wherein:

the storage/playback module (135) supports copyright protection features to control data storage thereat.

17. A module in a home entertainment system, the module comprising:

means for receiving (300, 400, 500) at least one of encoded audio data components and encoded video data components of a digital audio/video signal from a gateway (110) in the home entertainment system (100);

wherein the gateway (110) receives the digital audio/video signal from an external source;

at least one digital link (115, 130, 125) for linking the means for receiving (300, 400, 500) to the gateway; and

means (320, 330; 420; 520, 530) dedicated to one of: decoding and displaying the encoded video data components, decoding and reproducing the encoded audio data components, and performing storage/playback functions for storing and playing back at least one of the encoded audio data components and the encoded video data components.

18. A method for providing a home entertainment system, comprising:

receiving an external digital audio/video signal at a gateway (110), the external digital audio/video signal having encoded audio data components and encoded video data components;

communicating at least the encoded video data components to a dedicated video display module (120) via a respective digital link (115) for decoding and displaying;

communicating at least the encoded audio data components to a dedicated audio amplifier module (140) via a respective digital link (130) for decoding and reproducing; and

communicating at least one of the encoded audio data components and encoded video data components to a dedicated storage/playback module (135) via a respective digital link (125) for performing storage/playback functions.